

Ref

OPINIONS AND DECLARATIONS RENDERED BY THE INTER- NATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

Edited by

FRANCIS HEMMING, C.M.G., C.B.E.,

Secretary to the Commission

VOLUME 9. Part 20. Pp. 299—308

OPINION 328

Suppression, under the Plenary Powers, of the specific name *caesius* Cloquet, 1818, as published in the combination *Coluber caesius*, for the purpose of validating the specific name *irregularis* Leach, 1819, as published in the combination *Coluber irregularis* (Class Reptilia, Order Squamata)



LONDON :

Printed by Order of the International Trust for
Zoological Nomenclature
and

Sold on behalf of the International Commission on Zoological
Nomenclature by the International Trust at its Publications Office
41, Queen's Gate, London, S.W.7
1955

Price Five Shillings

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INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

COMPOSITION AT THE TIME OF THE ADOPTION OF THE RULING GIVEN IN OPINION 328

A. The Officers of the Commission

Honorary Life President : Dr. Karl Jordan (*British Museum (Natural History), Zoological Museum, Tring, Herts., England*).

President : (Vacant).

Vice-President : Senhor Dr. Afranio do Amaral (*Sao Paulo, Brazil*).

Secretary : Mr. Francis Hemming (*London, England*).

B. The Members of the Commission

(*arranged in order of precedence by reference to date of election or of most recent re-election, as prescribed by the International Congress of Zoology*).

Senhor Dr. Afranio do AMARAL (*S. Paulo, Brazil*) (*Vice-President*) (1st January 1944).

Professor J. R. DYMOND (*University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada*) (1st January 1944).

Professor J. Chester BRADLEY (*Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., U.S.A.*) (28th March 1944).

Professor Harold E. VOKES (*Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.*) (23rd April 1944).

Dr. William Thomas CALMAN (*Coulsdon, Surrey, England*) (1st January 1947).

Professor Béla HANKÓ (*Békéscsaba, Hungary*) (1st January 1947).

Dr. Norman R. STOLL (*Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, New York, N.Y., U.S.A.*) (1st January 1947).

Professor H. BOSCHMA (*Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden, The Netherlands*) (1st January 1947).

Senor Dr. Angel CABRERA (*Eva Peron, F.C.N.G.R., Argentina*) (27th July 1948).

Mr. Francis HEMMING (*London, England*) (*Secretary*) (27th July 1948).

Dr. Joseph PEARSON (*Tasmanian Museum, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia*) (27th July 1948).

Dr. Henning LEMCHE (*Universitetets Zoologiske Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark*) (27th July 1948).

Professor Teiso ESAKI (*Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan*) (17th April 1950).

Professor Pierre BONNET (*Université de Toulouse, France*) (9th June 1950).

Mr. Norman Denbigh RILEY (*British Museum (Natural History), London*) (9th June 1950).

Professor Tadeusz JACZEWSKI (*Department of Systematic Zoology, Warsaw University, Warsaw, Poland*) (15th June 1950).

Professor Robert MERTENS (*Natur-Museum u. Forschungs-Institut Senckenberg, Frankfurt a. M., Germany*) (5th July 1950).

Professor Erich Martin HERING (*Zoologisches Museum der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany*) (5th July 1950).

OPINION 328

SUPPRESSION, UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS, OF THE SPECIFIC NAME "CAESIUS" CLOQUET, 1818, AS PUBLISHED IN THE COMBINATION "COLUBER CAESIUS", FOR THE PURPOSE OF VALIDATING THE SPECIFIC NAME "IRREGULARIS" LEACH, 1819, AS PUBLISHED IN THE COMBINATION "COLUBER IRREGULARIS" (CLASS REPTILIA, ORDER SQUAMATA)

RULING : (1) Under the Plenary Powers, the specific name *caesius* Cloquet, 1818, as published in the combination *Coluber caesius*, is hereby suppressed for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy.

(2) The locality for the nominal species *Dendrophis (Philothamnus) semivariiegata* Smith, 1847, is to be interpreted as restricted by Bogert, 1940, namely "Bushman Flat, Cape Province".

(3) The under-mentioned specific names are hereby placed on the *Official List of Specific Names in Zoology* as Name Nos. 234 and 235 respectively :—(a) *irregularis* Leach, 1819, as published in the combination *Coluber irregularis* ; (b) *semivariiegata* Smith, 1847, as published in the combination *Dendrophis (Philothamnus) semivariiegata* (specific name of type species of *Philothamnus* Smith, 1847).

(4) The under-mentioned generic name is hereby placed on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* as Name No. 796 :—*Philothamnus* Smith, 1847 (gender : masculine) (type species, by monotypy : *Dendrophis (Philothamnus) semivariiegata* Smith, 1847).

(5) The under-mentioned specific name is hereby placed on the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology* as Name No. 109 :—*caesius* Cloquet, 1818, as published in the combination *Coluber caesius*, as suppressed, under the Plenary Powers, under (1) above.

I.—THE STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On 28th March 1951 Dr. Arthur Loveridge (*Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A.*) submitted an application for the use of the Plenary Powers for the purpose of validating the specific name *irregularis* Leach, 1819, as published in the combination *Coluber irregularis*, as against the older name *caesius* Cloquet, 1818, as published in the combination *Coluber caesius*. This application as subsequently slightly revised, was as follows :—

Proposed use of the Plenary Powers to suppress the trivial name “caesius” Cloquet, 1818, as published in the binominal combination “Coluber caesius” (Class Reptilia, Order Squamata)

By ARTHUR LOVERIDGE

(*Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A.*)

During the course of a revisionary study of the African Green snakes commonly referred to the genera *Chlorophis* Hallowell, 1857 (*Proc. Acad. nat. Sci. Philad.* 1857 : 53) and *Philothamnus* Smith, 1847 (*Ill. Zool. S. Afr. (Rept.)* : pl. lix), I find that the trivial name (*irregularis*) of the commonest and most widely distributed member of the genus *Chlorophis* is antedated.

2. The trivial name *irregularis* Leach, 1819 (*in* Bowditch, *Miss. Ashanti* : 494 “Fantee, Gold Coast”), as published in the binominal combination *Coluber irregularis*, has been almost consistently applied (in combination either with the name *Ahaetulla* or the name *Chlorophis* or the name *Philothamnus*) to this common reptile since 1858 (Günther), occurring 113 times in the literature.

3. However, the stability of the name of this species is threatened by the trivial name *caesius* Cloquet, 1818 (*Dict. Sci. nat.*, Paris 11 : 201 "Region of Cape Verde"), as published in the binominal combination *Coluber caesius*, a name which has never been used by anyone, other than its original author Cloquet. The description of *caesius* conforms to that of *irregularis* in all respects, except that the number of its subcaudals is given as sixty-four, whereas the range for *irregularis* is from 97 to 121. I suggest that the tail of the type specimen of *caesius* was truncated, for quite a high percentage of these whip-tailed tree snakes lose the ends of their tails during life. When such a loss occurs early in life, the tail heals over and the terminal point is reproduced, so that the tail closely resembles its original condition.

4. In further support of the identification of *caesius* with *irregularis*, we have to note that, with the possible exception of *semivariegata* Smith, 1847 (*Dendrophis (Philothamnus) semivariegata* Smith, 1847, *Ill. Zool. S. Afr.* (Rept.): pls. lix, lx, lxiv, figs. 1a—b "Bushman Flat, Cape Province") *irregularis* is the only species of the genus which extends so far west as the region of Cape Verde, the type locality of *caesius*.

5. In order to avoid the quite unnecessary confusion and instability which would result from the substitution of the entirely unknown name *caesius* Cloquet for the universally accepted name *irregularis* Leach, I ask the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature :—

- (1) to use its Plenary Powers to suppress the trivial name *caesius* Cloquet, 1818, as published in the combination *Coluber caesius*, for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy ;
- (2) to place the under-mentioned trivial names on the *Official List of Specific Trivial Names in Zoology* :—
 - (a) *irregularis* Leach, 1819, as published in the combination *Coluber irregularis* ;
 - (b) *semivariegata* Smith, 1847, as published in the combination *Dendrophis (Philothamnus) semivariegata*, the type locality of the species so named to be interpreted as specified by Bogert, 1940 (*Bull. amer. Mus. nat. Hist.* 77 : 56) (trivial name of type species of *Philothamnus* Smith, 1847) ;
- (3) to place the generic name *Philothamnus* Smith, 1847 (gender : masculine) (type species, by monotypy : *Dendrophis (Philothamnus) semivariegata* Smith, 1847) on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* ;

- (4) to place the trivial name *caesius* Cloquet, 1818, as published in the combination *Coluber caesius*, as proposed, in (1) above, to be suppressed under the Plenary Powers, on the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Trivial Names in Zoology*.

II.—THE SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF THE CASE

2. Registration of the present application : On the receipt of Dr. Loveridge's letter of 28th March 1951, the question of the possible use of the Commission's Plenary Powers for the purpose of preserving the specific name *irregularis* Leach, 1819, as published in the combination *Coluber irregularis*, was allotted the Registered Number Z.N.(S.) 531.

3. Publication of the present application : The present application was sent to the printer in May 1951 and was published on 28th September of that year in Part 3 of volume 6 of the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature* (Loveridge, 1951, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 6 : 88—89).

4. Supplementary Note furnished by Dr. Loveridge : In a letter dated 11th May 1951, Dr. Loveridge furnished the following supplementary note on the distribution of *Coluber irregularis* Leach, 1819 : " Since filing my application, I have borrowed two snakes from Dakar, Senegal, that appeared as *P. semivariegatus* in the literature. Both proved to be *irregularis*, *i.e.* topotypes of *caesius* ".

5. Issue of Public Notices : Under the revised arrangements prescribed by the Thirteenth International Congress of Zoology, Paris, 1948 (1950, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 4 : 50—56), Public Notice of the possible use by the International Commission on

Zoological Nomenclature of its Plenary Powers in the present case was given on 28th September 1951, both in Part 3 of volume 6 of the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature* (the Part in which Dr. Loveridge's application was published) and also to the other prescribed serial publications. The publication of these Notices elicited no objection to the action proposed.

6. Support received from Professor Dr. R. Mertens (Natur-Museum u. Forschungs-Institut Senckenberg, Senckenberg-Anlage, Frankfurt a. M., Germany) : On 24th October 1951, Professor Dr. R. Mertens (*Natur-Museum u. Forschungs-Institut Senckenberg, Senckenberg-Anlage, Frankfurt a. M., Germany*) addressed to the Commission the following letter in support of Dr. Loveridge's application (1952, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* **6** : 224) :—

Ich schliesse mich den Ausführungen des herrn A. Loveridge an und befürworte seinen Antrag um Unterdrückung des Artnamens *caesius* Cloquet. Auch stimme ich seinen Vorschlägen um Aufnahme der von ihm erwähnten Artnamen *irregularis* und *semivariegata* in die *Official List of Specific Trivial Names in Zoology* und des Gattungsnamens *Philothamnus* in die *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* bei.

III.—THE DECISION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

7. Issue of Voting Paper V.P.(52)53 : On 22nd May 1952, a Voting Paper (V.P.(52)53) was issued in which the Members of the Commission were invited to vote either for, or against, the proposal "relating to the trivial name *caesius*, Cloquet, 1818, as published in the combination *Coluber caesius*, as set out in Points (1) to (4) on page 89 in volume 6 of the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature*" [*i.e.* in paragraph 5 of the application reproduced in the first paragraph of the present *Opinion*].

8. The Prescribed Voting Period : As the foregoing Voting Paper was issued under the Three-Month Rule, the Prescribed Voting Period closed on 22nd August 1952.

9. Particulars of the Voting on Voting Paper V.P.(52)53 : The state of the voting on Voting Paper V.P.(52)53 at the close of the Prescribed Voting Period was as follows :—

(a) *Affirmative Votes had been given by the following sixteen (16) Commissioners (arranged in the order in which Votes were received) :*

Calman ; Hering ; Dymond ; Hankó ; Bonnet ; Vokes ;
Pearson ; do Amaral ; Hemming ; Biadley ; Esaki ;
Riley ; Lemche ; Mertens ; Stoll ; Boschma ;

(b) *Negative Votes :*

None ;

(c) *Voting Papers not returned, two (2) :*

Cabrera¹ ; Jaczewski.

10. Declaration of Result of Vote : On 23rd August 1952, Mr. Hemming, Secretary to the International Commission, acting as Returning Officer for the Vote taken on Voting Paper V.P.(52)53, signed a Certificate that the Votes cast were as set out in paragraph 9 above and declaring that the proposal submitted in the foregoing Voting Paper had been duly adopted and that the decision so taken was the decision of the International Commission in the matter aforesaid.

11. On 10th May 1954 Mr. Hemming prepared the Ruling given in the present *Opinion* and at the same time signed a Certificate that the terms of that Ruling were in complete accord with those of the proposal approved by the International Commission in its Vote on Voting Paper V.P.(52)53.

¹ After the close of the Prescribed Voting Period, an affirmative vote was received (on 1st September, 1952) from Commissioner Cabrera.

12. The following are the original references for the names placed on the *Official Lists* and *Official Indexes* by the Ruling given in the present *Opinion* :—

caesius, *Coluber*, Cloquet, 1818, *Dict. Sci. nat.*, Paris 11 : 201
irregularis, *Coluber*, Leach, 1819, in Bowditch, *Miss. Ashanti* : 494
Philothamnus Smith, 1847, *Ill. Zool. S. Afr.* (Rept.) : pl. lix
semivariiegata, *Dendrophis* (*Philothamnus*), Smith, 1847, *Ill. Zool. S. Afr.* : pls. lix, lx, lxiv, figs. 1a—b

13. The following is the reference to the publication of the restricted locality (1953, *Copenhagen Decisions zool. Nomencl.* : 26—27, Decision 31) of “Bushman Flat, Cape Province” for the nominal species *Dendrophis* (*Philothalmus*) *semivariiegata* Smith, 1847, specified in the Ruling given in the present *Opinion* :—Bogert, 1940, *Bull. amer. Mus. nat. Hist.* 77 : 56.

14. The application dealt with in the present *Opinion* was published in the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature* prior to the establishment of the *Official List of Family-Group Names in Zoology* by the Fourteenth International Congress of Zoology, Copenhagen, 1953. It has not been possible since then to deal with this aspect of the present case. This question is, however, now being examined on a separate File to which the Registered Number Z.N.(G.) 75 has been allotted.

15. At the time of the adoption of the Ruling given in the present *Opinion*, the expression prescribed for the second portion of the binomen which constitutes the scientific name of a species was the expression “trivial name” and the *Official List* reserved for recording such names was styled the *Official List of Specific Trivial Names in Zoology*, the word “trivial” appearing also in the title of the *Official Index* reserved for recording rejected and invalid names of this category. Under a decision taken by the Fourteenth International Congress of Zoology, Copenhagen, 1953, the expression “specific name” was substituted for the expression “trivial name” and corresponding changes were made in the titles of the *Official List* and *Official Index* of such names (1953, *Copenhagen Decisions zool. Nomencl.* : 21). The changes in terminology so adopted have been incorporated in the Ruling given in the present *Opinion*.

16. The prescribed procedures were duly complied with by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature in dealing with the present case, and the present *Opinion* is accordingly hereby rendered in the name of the said International Commission by the under-signed Francis Hemming, Secretary to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, in virtue of all and every the powers conferred upon him in that behalf.

17. The present *Opinion* shall be known as *Opinion* Three Hundred and Twenty-Eight (328) of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature.

DONE in London, this Tenth day of May, Nineteen Hundred and Fifty-Four.

*Secretary to the International Commission
on Zoological Nomenclature*

FRANCIS HEMMING